

Maximizing Student Success with Bb Learn

Summary of Key Findings

Student support staff including academic advisers at Gateway Student Success Center (GSC), staff from the Academic Success Centers (ASC), and leadership from the Student Technology Center (STC) gathered information concerning student barriers to success with Bb Learn. Two key barriers emerged from all three centers, related to both online and in person course design and facilitation in Bb Learn. A third barrier emerged which is related to findings in a 2016 needs assessment of geographically dispersed and part time faculty conducted by Faculty Professional Development (FPD). Faculty in the needs assessment identified the following skills as beneficial for their teaching effectiveness:

- A. Help in structuring classes on Bb Learn
- B. Information about resources at NAU for developing classes
- C. Consistent criteria of course standards across classes
- D. Bb Learn training
- E. Training in technology
- F. Best practices for online design

Need for support in the above teaching technologies is related the barrier to student success identified by STC. Lack of training in online teaching technologies created 600 student-initiated calls/tickets that required escalation up to the LMS faculty support and the instructor in 2018.

1. Variability in course design across the institution.

- The variability puts the burden onto students to learn how to navigate each class, each semester, without the opportunity to develop transferrable mastery.
- Students spend valuable time navigating rather than completing coursework.
- Student services staff report the inconsistency overwhelms students

2. Misaligned communication strategies.

- Lack of transparency concerning communication expectations between faculty and students.
- Lack of mutually effective communication practices between faculty/student.

3. Inconsistent use of online teaching technologies.

- Why using institutionally supported technologies are important (accessibility, support, compatibility)
- Inconsistent use of settings in Bb Learn tools (adaptive release, additional attempts, force completion)
- Students spend valuable time navigating support services rather than completing coursework.

Recommended Best Practices in Course Facilitation and Design

Based on the information from both faculty and students, recommendations are provided for high-impact pedagogies to mitigate the identified barriers.

Creating cohesive and transparent design structures.

- Collaborate with program/department to design a **Bb Learn structure that is consistent** across all courses in a given sequence
- Create a **welcome video tour** showing students how to navigate your course.
- Use the “official” Bb Learn titles for tools and learning activities.

Managing course communications and feedback.

- Create a **Communications Policy** explaining to students:

- Specify the modes of communication you expect students to use for course activities.
- Provide your availability (online office hours, in person office hours, phone contact)
- Define the Communication tools (NAU email or Bb Learn Course Messages)
- Communicate expected response time
- Clarify your professional etiquette expectations for communicating effectively
- Define turnaround time for grading assignments

- Use the **Bb Learn Gradebook** to track all student grades (even for assignments submitted in person), and update it regularly throughout the semester.
- Use the Bb Learn Rubric Tool to communicate expectations and provide detailed feedback

Learning and using available technologies effectively.

- Even if you've been using Bb Learn for many years, take advantage of available trainings and continuing professional development
- Request feedback from e-Learning or a colleague on your course design
- Consult with an NAU Instructional Designer before making updates to your course
- Stay informed of current best practices as they evolve to reflect generational shifts
- Confirm with the LMS Help Desk that institutional support is available before adopting new technologies

Even when the technology stays the same, the ways students engage with it can change significantly over time.